



The SPACE report, plans, p.4



Holiday music, p.12

USDA Reveals Public Comment Support For BARC as Funding Showdown Looms

by Owen Kelley



BARC buildings 307 and 307B in December after a dusting of snow

In December, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published two documents related to the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), a facility located just north of Greenbelt. In July, the USDA had announced that it would vacate this facility after winding down research there during the next few years.

One of the documents published in December summarizes the support for BARC expressed

during this fall's public comment period on the departmentwide reorganization plan. The other document shows how deeply the USDA cut its research staff nationwide during 2025.

By January 11, Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins must report to Congress how much she will spend on BARC and on each of her department's other research units during Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. Public Law 119-37

establishes this deadline as occurring 60 days after the law was passed. It is inconvenient for the Secretary that strong support for BARC has come to light so close to this deadline.

Strong Support

Published on December 8, the USDA's summary of public comments can be found by searching online for USDA Reorganization

See BARC, page 6

Council Gets First Look at Budget, Meets with Legislative Consultants

by Matthew Arbach

The Greenbelt City Council worksession on December 17 began with a first look at the upcoming budget with new City Treasurer Ron Covington. On December 8, the city received a report from the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) that listed the city's taxable assets, with the information included in this initial budget presentation. City Manager Josué Salmerón said that this budget would have nothing unexpected, have no new initiatives and would be a status quo approach in line with the last two years. A primary challenge will be rising costs in all areas with a revenue stream that is not keeping pace. Covington used this new financial assessment with historical data to make likely estimates in how the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget will finally take shape.

Projected Shortfalls

Covington stated that the revenue needed for projected, recurring and new costs, is \$4,445,000. The recurring and new costs were: police union increases (\$635,000); worker's compensation (\$30,000); general liability insurance (\$75,000); health insurance increases (\$73,000); sal-

ary increases (\$800,000); building capital reserve fund (\$1M); capital project fund (\$1.5M); late staff evaluations (\$100,000); and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) positions (\$233,000). (Late evaluations refer to performance evaluations completed outside the required review cycle. The \$100,000 associated cost is allocated as an anticipated increase that includes retroactive pay and upward adjustment to base salary).

Covington also laid out the projected increase in revenues at \$1,156,400, with total revenues at \$41,328,000. The specific pre-budget FY 2027 projections were: real estate taxes (\$25,918,000), personal property taxes (\$1,495,500), other

taxes (\$5,686,300), licenses and permits (\$1,328,400), intergovernmental (\$1,468,800), charges for services (\$2,446,600), fines and forfeitures (\$519,000), interest (\$300,000), miscellaneous revenues (\$333,400) and inter-fund transfers/use of unassigned general fund balance (\$1,831,700).

Future Implications

Covington showed an analysis of the

See BUDGET, page 8



City Treasurer Ron Covington

SCREENSHOT COURTESY CITY OF GREENBELT

What Goes On

Monday, January 5

Save As You Throw (SAYT) program begins
7:30 p.m., City Council Worksession: Discussion with Cell-phone Service Providers on Improving Cellular Service within the City, Municipal Building

Wednesday, January 7

7:30 p.m., Council Worksession: Administrative, Municipal Building

See the city ad on page 5 or the meetings calendar at greenbeltdmd.gov for more information.

Top Stories of 2025

This year's end replay of Top Stories was prepared by News Review staff members: Anna Bedford-Dillow, Deanna Dawson, Carol Griffith, Erica Johns, Sandra Lange, Diane Oberg, Sandy Rodgers and Pat Scully.

FBI, BARC and BEP

Proposed and existing federal facilities in and near Greenbelt took major hits this year. A multi-year process led to the selection of Greenbelt as the site for a new FBI headquarters, announced in November 2023. That relocation plan came to a grinding halt in March 2025, when President Donald Trump announced his intention to keep the FBI in Washington, D.C., with the Ronald Reagan Building the new proposed site.

Sweeping plans for reorganization of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), including closure of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), were announced in July. Researchers were informed that they would likely be moved to one of five locations across the country, with details sparse. Emergency meetings, Senate hearings, criticism from Democrats and Republicans alike and some Fiscal Year 2026 funding have provided some hope for the future of the facility and its hundreds of employees. In December 2025, USDA released a summary of public comments on its reorganization, which revealed strong, broad support for BARC. It remains unclear whether USDA will vacate BARC over the next few years.

A solicitation for the construction of a Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) facility to be built at BARC was cancelled in January due to reported budgetary constraints.



Yard sign supporting BARC in Greenbelt

PHOTO BY SANDY RODGERS

Impacts on Federal Employees

Greenbelt federal employees and contractors have faced an onslaught of upheavals since January 20. The ironically named Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) instigated abrupt, chaotic layoffs of probationary employees, offers of deferred resignations (the "fork in the road") and early retirements throughout the executive branch, with no consideration for the work of those laid off or leaving.

People working for the now-dismantled U.S. Agency for International Development experienced mass firings; many were stranded abroad or locked out of their offices by the abrupt closure.

Protests in support of federal workers drew thousands, with protesters on the Spellman Overpass on most Fridays, but failed to stop the hardships being imposed by the administration. Employees (and contractors) feared reprisals if they spoke out against DOGE actions.

Major employers in and near Greenbelt facing the greatest upheavals and uncertain futures are NASA, USDA, and the National Archives and Records Administration. City, county, state and federal officials offered advice and guidance for jobless residents following cuts; job fairs abounded. Meanwhile, local families faced mounting financial hardship.

And then, on October 1, the entire federal government shut down with a lapse in funding appropriations by Congress. Workers were furloughed; essential workers continued on the job without pay. The October 16 community food distribution by GAIL and SHABACH! Ministries had a turnout of hundreds, with cars in three lines stretching far back along Crescent Road.

SNAP benefits, a program that feeds more than 42 million Americans, lapsed on November 1.

The shutdown ended on November 12. Although SNAP and a few agencies are funded through the fiscal year, most parts of the government are only funded through January 30. Stay tuned.



October food distribution line

PHOTO BY FLORY LIETZ

Maglev Stopped in Its Tracks

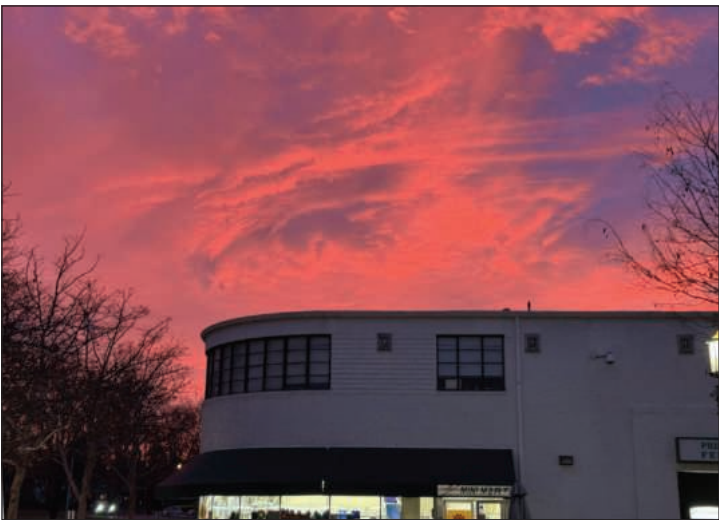
In August, the Federal Railroad Administration announced that the project to build the Baltimore-Washington Superconducting Magnetic Levitation rail line, known as maglev, was cancelled. Officials cited the substantial negative impacts to federal agencies and significant infrastructure. And there was great rejoicing throughout Greenbelt and its environs, as the project had long been opposed here.



Stop the MAGLEV yard sign

PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

See TOP STORIES, page 6



Sunset on a wintry day over Greenbelt

PHOTO BY LOIS ROSADO



Greenbelt Cinema
129 Centerway
301-329-2034
www.greenbeltcinema.org

Members always \$7.00!
Member kids are always FREE!

After 5 PM: adults \$10, kids \$7,
senior/student/military \$9

Before 5 PM:
general admission \$8, kids \$6

OC = Open Captions
CC = Closed Captions
DVS = Descriptive Video Service

SHOWTIMES:
JANUARY 2nd - 8th

Marty Supreme (R)
(CC) (DVS) (2025) (149 mins)
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Fri. 5:00 PM, 8:15 PM
Sun. 2:00 PM, 5:20 PM
Mon. 4:00 PM (OC), 7:15 PM
Wed. 7:45 PM
Screen 2 - The Screening Room
Sat. 5:00 PM, 8:15 PM
Tue. 7:10 PM
Thurs. 5:30 PM

Hamnet (PG-13)
(CC) (DVS) (2025) (125 mins)
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Sat. 8:30 PM
Tues. 7:25 PM
Thurs. 5:15 PM
Screen 2 - The Screening Room
Fri. 8:30 PM
Sun. 5:35 PM
Mon. 7:00 PM
Wed. 8:00 PM

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid
(PG) (1969) (110 mins)
Free Cinema Classic in
memory of Robert Redford
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Mon. 1:00 PM
Thurs. 8:00 PM

Spinal Tap Double Feature
(R) (1984/2025) (188 mins)
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Wed. 3:45 PM
Thurs. 1:15 PM
Screen 2 - The Screening Room
Fri. 4:15 PM
Sun 1:30 PM

When Harry Met Sally...
(R) (1989) (96 mins)
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Fri. 2:40 PM
Tue. 5:00 PM

Misery (R) (1990) (107 mins)
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Sat. 5:15 PM
Screen 2 - The Screening Room
Mon. 3:40 PM



Shaya Neveu (6) enjoys the snowy holiday season in Greenbelt.

PHOTO BY MARC NEVEU



Letters Policy

Deadline for letters is 6 p.m. Monday. Submission does not guarantee publication. Letters should be no longer than 300 words (shorter letters are more likely to be published).

Letters may be edited for clarity, grammar, civility and space constraints. The News Review may add a comment from the editor if deemed necessary.

All letters must include the letter writer's name, physical address, and telephone number. Only the name will be published; the News Review will consider requests for the name to be withheld.



Greenbelt News Review

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PUBLICATION DEADLINES:

- Monday 2 p.m. Articles/photos over 700 words, Display ads (not camera ready).
- Monday 6 p.m. All letters to the editor (300 word limit).
- Tuesday 2 p.m. Articles/photos under 700 words, photographs not associated with a story.
- Tuesday 5 p.m. Co-op dropbox: Classified ads with payment only.
- Tuesday 6 p.m. Classified ads and camera-ready display ads.
- Email submission is available. Hardcopy submissions (delivered by respective deadline) may be mailed to the address above or left in the Co-op grocery store drop box or GNR external office door mail slot, as shown below.
- Payment must accompany ads except by prior arrangement.

MAIL SUBSCRIPTION: \$55/year

Greenbelt Community Center at 15 Crescent Rd.
OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Tuesday, 2 - 4 p.m.
GNR external office door mail slot is located up a few stairs 25 yards left of the Community Center's east door near the Municipal Building.

On Screen at Greenbelt Cinema

Marty Supreme

Marty Mauser (Timoth   Chalamet), a young man with a dream no one respects, goes to hell and back in pursuit of greatness. Chalamet trained in table tennis for six to seven years to prepare for his role in the movie. He kept up his training while working on other films, including Wonka, Dune 2, The French Dispatch and A Complete Unknown, by traveling with a table.

Hamnet

From Academy Award-winning writer/director Chlo   Zhao, the film tells the powerful story of love and loss that inspired the creation of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, Hamlet. After losing their son Hamnet to the plague, Agnes (Jessie Buckley) and William Shakespeare (Paul Mescal) grapple with grief in 16th-century England. A healer, Agnes must find strength to care for her surviving children while processing her devastating loss.

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

This film is the true story of fast-draws and wild rides, battles with posses, train and bank robberies, a torrid love affair and a new lease on outlaw life in far-away Bolivia. It is also a character study of a remarkable friendship between Butch - possibly the most likeable outlaw in frontier history - and his closest associate, the fabled, ever-dangerous Sundance Kid.

Spinal Tap Double Feature

This Is Spinal Tap, the original 1984 film, shines a light on the self-contained universe of a metal band struggling to get back on the charts, including everything from its complicated history of ups and downs, gold albums, name changes and undersold concert dates, along with the full host of requisite groupies, promoters, hangers-on and historians, sessions, release events and those special behind-the-scenes moments that keep it all real.

Spinal Tap II: The End Continues features the now-estranged bandmates David St. Hubbins, Nigel Tufnel and Derek Smalls (Michael McKean, Christopher Guest and Harry Shearer), who are forced to reunite for one final concert. It marks the resurrection of documentarian Marty Di Bergi (Rob Reiner), once again trying to capture his favorite metal gods as they contemplate mortality - and the hope that their 12th drummer doesn't join them in The Great Beyond. Joined by music royalty Paul McCartney and Elton John, they wrestle with their checkered past to put on a concert that they hope will solidify their place in the pantheon of rock 'n' roll.

When Harry Met Sally...

In 1977, college graduates Harry Burns (Billy Crystal) and Sally Albright (Meg Ryan) share a contentious car ride from Chicago to New York, during which they argue about whether men and women can ever truly be strictly platonic friends. Ten years later, Harry and Sally meet again at a bookstore, and in the company of their respective best friends, Jess (Bruno Kirby) and Marie (Carrie Fisher), attempt to stay friends without sex becoming an issue between them.

Misery

After a serious car crash, novelist Paul Sheldon (James Caan) is rescued by former nurse Annie Wilkes (Kathy Bates), who claims to be his biggest fan. Wilkes brings him to her remote cabin to recover, where her obsession takes a dark turn when she discovers Sheldon is killing off her favorite character from his novels. As Sheldon devises plans for escape, Wilkes grows increasingly controlling, even violent, as she forces the author to shape his writing to suit her twisted fantasies.

2025 at The SPACE Was Busy, Gratifying; More Coming 2026

by Shaymar Higgs



Shaymar Higgs pictured in The SPACE

The SPACE: Free Art For All continued to grow as a creative, healing and community-centered hub – because of you. What started as a three-week pop-up in 2018 has become a place where art, wellness, workforce development and human connection come together with intention.

This year, together, participants sustained their free music, yoga, sewing and arts classes; celebrated Emerald City Pride all summer long; launched their first Stop-Motion Animation Summer Camp; expanded their makerspace, 3D printing and Artrepreneurship programs, working with students from high schools across Maryland and Washington, D.C.; officially opened the American Job Center Workforce Development & Community Resource Center at The SPACE; and were featured in The Washington Post, Greenbelt News Review, VoyageBaltimore and other DMV publications.

Every workshop, gathering and shared moment was about one thing: making sure art, creativity, access and equity remain available to everyone.

Looking Ahead to 2026

In the year ahead, The SPACE looks forward to continuing their regular programming of free classes in music, arts, yoga, sewing, design and fabrication; partnering with professional rehabilitation programs to provide free prosthetics and assistive devices for those in need; offering more advanced Computer-Aided Design classes for students and educators; and expanding into Prince George’s County.

Shaymar Higgs is the founder and executive director of The SPACE.

PHOTO COURTESY THE SPACE

In Memoriam Remembering Charo

by Mary Jo Gabiam, on behalf of her neighbors

Our dear friend and neighbor “Charo” died on Saturday, December 20. Her real name was Maria del Rosario de Fatima Berumen Guzman, but we all knew her by her nickname, Charo. She moved to Greenbelt in August 2016 to join her daughter Alejandra, already a resident.

Charo was most often accompanied by her chihuahua pup Canela (“cinnamon” in Spanish). Both Charo and Canela were proudly Mexican, but they loved Greenbelt, where they made many friends, whom Charo greeted alternatively with “Hola” or “Good Morning.”

Several of her neighbors who are struggling to learn Spanish took advantage of her eagerness to help out with homework and conversation practice. Teacher and students became fast friends in the process.

Charo greatly appreciated the attention and love she received from her neighbors both before and during her illness. Canela (now 16) remains with Alejandra and serves as a reminder of our lovely neighbor.

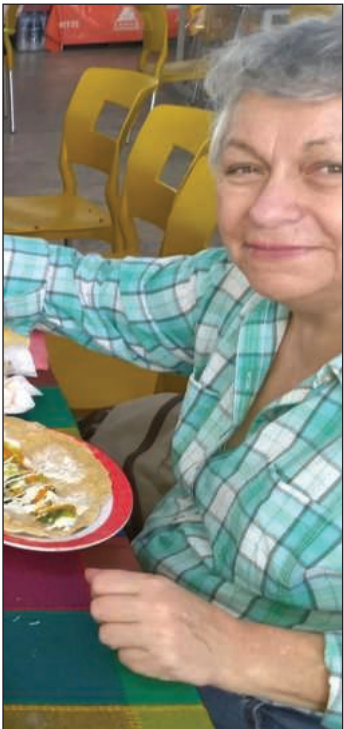


PHOTO COURTESY OF NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS

Charo's friendly smile



Our Neighbors

Sympathies to family, neighbors and students of Charo (Maria del Rosario de Fatima Berumen Guzman), who made many friends and taught much Spanish since settling in Greenbelt with her chihuahua Canela.

Happy Kwanzaa to those celebrating and wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

Send details of your news to editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com.



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301-681-6636

No special equipment needed

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF GREENBELT

Mass Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Community Center Room 114

15 Crescent Rd

cathcomgreenbelt.org

ALL ARE WELCOME!

A Roman Catholic Intentional Eucharistic Community

OR - Join us on ZOOM!

For ZOOM link:

[CCG1985+ownergroups.io](https://ccg1985+ownergroups.io)

Obituaries

The News Review publishes obituaries of Greenbelt residents, past or present.

You write it or we will if you prefer. We try to include information about participation in various activities and organizations, where the person lived and something about the family. A photograph and service information should be included. There is no charge.

Nonprofit?

Get your message here for \$32.40

www.GreenbeltNewsReview.com

As we approach the 250th anniversary of our country:

"O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees." – ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Greenbelt Bahá’í Community

www.greenbeltbahais.org

St. John's Episcopal Church

11040 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20704

301-937-4292 www.saintjohnsbeltsville.org

Welcomes you each Sunday for Worship & Sunday School at 10:00 AM

Mishkan Torah Congregation

10 Ridge Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770

Rabbi Saul Oresky, Cantor Phil Greenfield

An unpretentious, historic, welcoming, liberal, egalitarian synagogue that respects tradition and becomes your extended family in the 21st century.

Friday evening services at 8:00pm

Saturday morning services at 10:00am

Offering hybrid services, online and in-person activities

For further information, call (301) 474-4223 www.mishkantorah.org

Affiliated with these movements: Conservative and Reconstructing Judaism

Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church

Postal address: P.O. Box 676, Laurel, MD 20725

Phone: 301-937-3666 www.pbuuc.org

Welcomes you to our open, nurturing community

January 4, 2026, at 3 p.m.

Original Recipe

Anthony Jenkins with Worship Associate Carol Boston

In the spirit of our January theme (Upholding Justice and Unity), we'll consider how our personal understanding of human nature (original sin vs. original grace) flavors the way we do justice and/or injustice to our fellow humans.

Streaming on PBUUC's Facebook page, on Zoom, and in person. Worship service held at University Christian Church, 6800 Adelphi Road, Hyattsville, MD

Concert Band Holds Open House

Ready to make music, meet great people and grow your musicianship in a fun, supportive environment? Come to an open house for new Greenbelt Concert Band members on Monday, January 12 at 6:30 p.m. in Room 201 of the Community Center.

About the Band

The band plays for the joy of music and lifelong musical growth. They warmly welcome musicians of all levels who enjoy making music in a friendly, community-oriented setting. Regular rehearsals are on Mondays from 7 to 9 p.m. from September to June.

Not a musician? Join the fun. Become a Band Aide, a friend and supporter. Band Aides help welcome concert attendees, assist with setup and breakdown, and capture photos or videos for social media and promotions.

It's also a great opportunity for students seeking service credit hours.

Learn more about the band at greenbeltconcertband.org.

Mowatt Memorial United Methodist Church

40 Ridge Road, Greenbelt

Open hearts, Open Minds, Open doors

Find us on [facebook.com/mowattumc](https://www.facebook.com/mowattumc)

301-474-5410

Pastor Evelyn Romero

Worship Service, Sundays 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Living Generously in a World that Holds Back

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

GREENBELT COMMUNITY CHURCH

One Hillside Road

Join Us Sunday 10:15 AM for Worship

www.greenbeltcommunitychurch.org

ST. HUGH OF GRENOBLE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- Daily Mass: Mon-Fri 7:15am*, Sat 9am*
- Sunday Mass:
 - Sat vigil 5pm*
 - Sun 8am, 9:30am, 11am
- Confessions Saturday 3pm - 4pm.

Masks for the unvaccinated encouraged.

CELEBRATE WITH US

135 Crescent Rd.

www.sthughofgrenoble.org

*Live streamed on Facebook and available on our YouTube page later.

Poetry In The Garden

The poetry group will be meeting on Sunday, January 4, in the Schrom Hills Park clubhouse from 3 to 5 p.m. The public is welcome to attend to read a favorite poem or just enjoy listening and sharing feelings. Poetry in a foreign language with some translation is welcome.

This event is free of charge. Light refreshment is provided. If more information is needed, call 443-415-1053.

Toastmasters Meet

The Greenbelt Toastmasters Club invites all to join them online every first, third and fifth Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. The club provides a fun and friendly environment for anyone interested in improving their public speaking and leadership skills. Learn more at greenbelt.toastmastersclubs.org.



Donate Sneakers For People in Need

Greenbelt Community Church, United Church of Christ is collecting athletic shoes by partnering with GotSneakers. This sneaker recycling program helps to keep sneakers out of landfills, where they have harmful effects on the environment. A donation box is located outside the Fellowship Center (the small building behind the church) for people to drop off sneakers at any time.

Mahjong Group Meets Weekly on Wednesdays

The Greenbelt Mahjong Group meets Wednesdays at 1 p.m. in the Senior Game Room in the Community Center. Instructional classes are offered periodically. Check the Winter Recreation Guide for details.

Français, s’il Vous Plaît: At the Youth Center

A group of people interested in speaking French meets at the Youth Center every Thursday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. All ages and all levels of fluency are welcome.



City Information & Events

The strength of Greenbelt is diverse people living together in a spirit of cooperation. We celebrate all people. By sharing together all are enriched. We strive to be a respectful, welcoming community that is open, accessible, safe and fair.

GREENBELT CITY CALENDAR

Be sure to check out the City calendar for all up to date events at www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar.



MEETINGS FOR JANUARY 5-9

Monday, January 5 at 7:30pm, **DISCUSSION WITH CELL PHONE SERVICE PROVIDERS ON IMPROVING CELLULAR SERVICE WITHIN THE CITY**

Tuesday, January 6 at 7pm, **PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, On the Agenda: Discussion & Planning of PSAC’s Upcoming Forum on Teens, Modernization of Advisory Committee Acronym, Renewal of PSAC’s Membership with International Association of Chiefs of Police**

Wednesday, January 7 at 6:30pm, **ADVISORY PLANNING BOARD, On the Agenda: Approval of Agenda & Minutes, Council Liaison Updates, Discussion on M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Department, Referral for Springhill Lake Elementary School, Draft APB Bylaws**

Wednesday, January 7 at 7:30pm, **WORK SESSION - ADMINISTRATIVE**

Thursday, January 8 at 7pm, **COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD, On the Agenda: TBD**

In advance, the hearing impaired are advised to use MD RELAY at 711 to submit your questions/comments or contact the City Clerk at (301) 474-8000 or email banderson@greenbeltmd.gov. This schedule is subject to change. For confirmation that a meeting is being held call (301) 474-8000. For information on public participation for the meetings above, visit the meetings calendar at www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar.

CITY OF GREENBELT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, January 12, 2026 at 7:30pm
Greenbelt Municipal Building, 25 Crescent Road

Notice is hereby given that the City Council will conduct a public hearing on the Charter Amendment Resolution Number 2025-03 – Resolution Number 2124: A Charter Amendment Resolution of the Council of the City of Greenbelt to Amend §3-22 “Powers” of the City Charter to Authorize the City of Greenbelt to Engage in Collective Bargaining with a Representative of Public Works Employees by Following Procedures in Amended Article VIII of Chapter 13 of the City Code.

City Council will hold a public hearing on this charter resolution on January 12, 2026, at 7:30 pm in the Council Room at the Greenbelt Municipal Building located at 25 Crescent Road, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770. Public testimony will be received by the City Council at the hearing on the above date. Written comments may either be presented at this hearing or sent to the City Clerk.

The public is welcome to attend. The Charter Resolution is available online and at the Clerk’s office. For more information, please contact the City Manager’s office at (301) 474-8000.

Bonita Anderson, City Clerk
City of Greenbelt
301-474-8000

CURRENT GAIL PROGRAMS

- CARES is happy to provide the following programs **FREE** of charge. For more information, email Katherine Farzin at kfarzin@greenbeltmd.gov or (240) 542-2019.
- **OPEN COMPUTER LAB FOR ADULTS** 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. Weekly sign-up required.
 - **FREE MONTHLY DIAPER DISTRIBUTION** Greenbelt Residents Only. First time participants must provide proof of residency, state-issued ID, birth certificate (or copy) for each child.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

City Offices will be closed
Thursday, January 1, in observance of the
New Year’s Holidays.

REFUSE/RECYCLING SCHEDULE

Week of December 29

Monday Route – Collected Monday
Tuesday Route – Collected Tuesday
Wednesday Route – Collected Wednesday
Thursday Route – Collected Friday

There will be no appliance, hard plastics, or yard waste collections on Friday, January 2.

GREENBELT CONNECTION

The Greenbelt Connection will not operate on
Thursday, January 1.

RECOGNITION GROUP APPLICATIONS Deadline February 3

The City of Greenbelt is currently accepting all Recognition Group Applications for FY2026 (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027). The deadline is February 3, 2026. Applications can be found at <https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/465/Clubs-Contacts-and-Recognition-Groups>

For further information, please contact cpracht@greenbeltmd.gov.

SAVE AS YOU THROW BEGINS MONDAY, JANUARY 5

Be prepared for the first Save As You Throw pickup on January 5 with either your purple SAYT trash bags or a MaxTrash sticker on your bin.

If you opt for the SAYT trash bags, you can find them in-person at the following locations:

- **COOP Supermarket, 121 Centerway**
- **Beltway Plaza Hardware Store, 6000 Greenbelt Road (Beltway Plaza)**

MaxTrash stickers are now available for purchase online at <https://myflexusa.com/industries> or in-person at the Greenbelt Municipal Building Finance Window, 25 Crescent Road.

- Pay \$70 for 6 months (\$140/year)
- Toss up to 3 large bags per week in any brand bag
- Total annual cost: \$240 base + \$140 = \$380/year

For more information visit <https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/SAYT>

take the **Y** line
to greenbelt!



NEW METRO SERVICE TO GREENBELT

Starting on December 31, every other Yellow Line train will travel all the way to Greenbelt.

Half of Yellow Line trains will operate between Huntington and Greenbelt (every 12-15 minutes) and the other half will operate between Huntington and Mt. Vernon Sq (every 6-8 minutes).

FEATURED PETS

BUGS



Ready for Adoption? Call (301) 474-6124

7-month-old Bugs came to the shelter as a stray and was so scared of everything — like loud noises, sudden movements, and meeting new people. But once Bugs warms up to you, she loves a good scratch behind the ears, playing with stuffed toys, and getting crazy zoomies around the yard. Although Bugs has made tremendous strides in her socialization, she can still get easily spooked in new situations, and she may do well with another dog to show her the ropes and help her feel safe. Weighing just 25 pounds, Bugs’ small stature and big heart is sure to win you over!

If you’re interested in adopting bashful Bugs, please reach out to us at animalservices@greenbeltmd.gov or call us at (301)474-6124

CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION (2025-2026) THROUGH FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Your discarded Christmas Tree can be recycled. The Public Works Department will start picking up trees at the locations listed below on December 29th. The trees will be processed through the woodchipper and can then be used as mulch around trees and flower beds. Please remove all ornaments, lights, and tree stands.

Bring trees to the following areas marked with green tree signs until February 6, 2026.

MAP VIEW

View a GIS Map on the [Christmas Tree collection page](#) for a map of all locations.

GHI

- Ridge Rd - 73 Court (across on playground side)
- Plateau Pl & Ridge Rd (corner on playground side)
- Research Rd & Hillside Rd (corner)
- Ridge Rd - 44 Court (area near playground)
- Eastway & Crescent Rd (corner)
- Ridge Rd - 21 Court (across from Green Ridge House)
- Crescent Rd & Ridge Rd (playground at junction)
- Parkway (corner across from Community Church)
- Southway - 7 Court (playground at Little League field)
- Ridge Rd - 11 Court & 13 Court (common area between courts)

BOXWOOD

- Ivy Ln & Lastner Ln (next to playground)

LAKEWOOD

- Greenhill & Crescent (corner by Baptist Church)

UNIVERSITY SQUARE

- Open area in front of swimming pool

LAKESIDE NORTH

- Open area in front of swimming pool

SPRINGHILL LAKE

- Edmonston Rd (down from 9294 near dumpsters)

GREENBRIAR

- Hanover Pkwy (open area between buildings 7708 & 7710)
- Hanover Pkwy & Mandan Rd (corner near building 7824)

GLEN OAKS

- Mandan Rd (open area in front of building 8017)

HUNTING RIDGE

- Hanover Pkwy (open area between buildings 6936 & 6978)

WINDSOR GREEN

- Frankfurt Dr & Morrison Dr (corner across from pool parking lot)

GREENBROOK VILLAGE AND ESTATES

- Ora Glen Dr & Matthew St (corner)

- Hanover Pkwy & Greenbrook Dr (corner)

GREENWOOD VILLAGE

- Mandan Rd (corner at 7516)

GREENSPRING I & GREENSPRING II

- Greenbury Dr (park area between 7926 & 8006)

- Spring Manor Dr & Springshire Way (corner)

BELLE POINT

- Vanity Fair Dr & Prince James Way (corner)

GREENBELT LAKE VILLAGE

- Village Park Dr (open area between 6729 & 6715)

GREENBELT STATION

- Stream Bank Ln (open area across from Central Park)

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Volunteering for City of Greenbelt Committees & Boards is an excellent opportunity to engage with your community and make a difference. Choose from a number of committees & boards such as the Advisory Committee on Education, Advisory Committee on Trees, Arts Advisory Board, Board of Elections, Ethics Commission, Forest Preserve Advisory Board, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability, Park and Recreation Advisory Board, or Youth Advisory Committee and make a difference in Greenbelt!

Take the first step towards making a positive impact and apply for one of these committee vacancies today!

Call (301) 474-8000.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In the City of Greenbelt, we remain committed to embracing and celebrating the diversity of all. As our nation undergoes change, feelings of pride, uncertainty, and even fear may arise. Yet, we stand firm in the pledge that has defined Greenbelt since its inception and will not falter.

Learn more at <https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/government/know-your-rights-immigration-resources>.

ARTS HAPPENINGS

Visit www.greenbeltmd.gov/arts for more information and many other opportunities!

Sign up for ARTFANS, a weekly e-newsletter, at www.greenbeltmd.gov/list.aspx.

Artful Afternoons - FREE

Sunday, 1/4, 1-2pm and 2-3pm, *Greenbelt Community Center*. Decorate winter cards with watercolors and more. No experience needed. Suitable for all ages. Please sign up at sugeni.us/ehUi. Walk-ins also welcome.

Winter Session Begins Soon

Finalize your winter plans and register for classes soon; spaces fill quickly! The new session begins on January 5. Find information and how to register at www.greenbeltmd.gov/activityguide.

MORE ARTS HAPPENING SOON

- **Artful Afternoon** 1/11, 1:30-2:30pm, *Springhill Lake Recreation Center*. Sign up at sugeni.us/ehUi.
- **Friends and Family Workshop: Wool Felting Onto Sweaters** Friday, 1/16, 5:30-7:30pm, *Greenbelt Community Center*.
- **Art Share (Meet-Up)** Friday, 1/16, 7pm *Greenbelt Community Center, Room 113*.

SIGN UP FOR CURBSIDE COMPOSTING

Make composting the easiest resolution to check off of your list in the new year! For just \$10 you can help Greenbelt reduce food waste and create productive compost. Sign up today at compostcrew.com/greenbelt.

A majority (or quorum) of Greenbelt City Council members may attend community organization meetings, but no official Council action will be taken at these meetings. Please note that meeting locations may change after being published. For information on how to join these meetings, contact the respective organization directly.

TOP STORIES continued from page 1

Protests, Large and Ongoing

This was a year marked by protests – in Greenbelt and across the nation – beginning on April 5 with the Hands Off! National Day of Action in D.C. in response to the Trump administration’s Department of Government Efficiency efforts to severely reduce federal programs and jobs. Many Greenbelters joined thousands downtown on the National Mall,



PHOTO BY NICK HALL NH

Protesters along Greenbelt Road

while some 300 protested in Greenbelt at the Municipal Building and the Spellman Overpass at the Baltimore-Washington (BW) Parkway. The event was one of 17 Hands Off! demonstrations in Maryland and over 1,300 nationwide.

The No Kings march was the next major rally, in protest of presidential overreach. On June 14 a Greenbelt crowd estimated at 500 to 700 filled the Spellman Overpass to capacity. The gathering was one of around 2,000 nationwide, including D.C., that drew millions of protesters into the streets. At a second No Kings Day, a massive crowd, among them many Greenbelters, protested in D.C. on October 18. Back in the city, a large crowd gathered once again in front of the Municipal Building and marched to line both the Spellman Overpass and the Greenbelt Road/BW Parkway bridge.

Smaller gatherings took on the administration’s immigration policies, such as the April 4 vigil at the U.S. District Courthouse in Greenbelt in support of Beltsville resident Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who had been wrongly deported to the notorious CECOT prison in El Salvador. The Trump administration was fighting a court order to bring him back. He was eventually returned to the U.S., but held in ICE custody. Protests at the courthouse continued throughout the year. As of mid-December, Abrego Garcia was a free man, albeit temporarily, when he was released on home detention as his case continues to be adjudicated.

November 29 saw an ICE MELT protest with dozens of Greenbelt residents gathering across the street from the U.S. Park Police Greenbelt Station to raise an alarm as the federal U.S. Park Police were accused of aiding ICE.

County School System Changes

In February we reported that the company BusPatrol paid for Prince George’s County Public Schools’ (PGCPS) use of the long-failing bus tracking system, StopFinder. We looked into the contract secured after PGCPS



GRAPHIC COURTESY PGCPS

Chipmunk School Bus Tracker

changed everything from bus stops to bell times in its transportation overhaul but continued its use of the app over parents’ and board members’ objections. We reported that BusPatrol also has an ongoing contract with PGCPS to provide cameras for the stop arms on school buses, a contract that in FY 2023 alone netted BusPatrol over \$6.6 million and PGCPS only \$597,444.77 (see the February 5 issue). Later, a legislative audit in March flagged the contract with BusPatrol for paying the company higher than average fees and for not using a competitive bid process. That audit also highlighted payments to absent Board Member David Murray (since resigned) and inappropriate payments for the legal fees of then Board Member and now County Council Member Shayla Adams-Stafford (see the September 11 issue).

In June, PGCPS reached a separation agreement with former Superintendent Millard House II, who had been in the position for only two years. It followed a surprise vote of no confidence by the Prince George’s County Educators Association (PGCEA), which was in the middle of collective bargaining negotiations. PGCEA said over 75 percent of those participating voted no confidence in the superintendent but did not share the numbers of votes. Critics of the vote claimed few knew of it or participated and believed that it was politically motivated. On June 13, incoming County Executive Aisha Braveboy named Shawn Joseph as Interim Superintendent, the day after House’s resignation, prior to her own swearing in a week later. Joseph himself was ousted from his former superintendent position in Nashville, leading to concern by those surprised by the rapid appointment. The severance package with Superintendent House has not been publicly shared but the News Review was able to report that the salary portion of the payout to House was \$733,994.64 (see the July 23 issue).

In the fall of 2025, PGCPS rolled out a new bus tracking system called Chipmunk to replace StopFinder. Greenbelt buses went live with the new app in November.

ICE Activities Concern Residents

In May, Greenbelt was included on a list of sanctuary cities, counties and states that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice said were defying federal immigration laws and endangering Americans. A shorter, updated list, posted October 31 on the Justice Department website, did



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

ICE protest at the Municipal Building

See TOP STORIES, page 7

BARC continued from page 1

Summary. This 31-page document reveals there is strong support for increasing BARC funding among respondents in the Mid-Atlantic states and beyond and from both the public and elected officials. The summary also shows strong opposition to vacating BARC.

The summary states that 2,185 individuals submitted comments about BARC and 2,015 of them express “strong opposition to the potential closure or reorganization of BARC.” Commenters said BARC is “widely recognized as a hub for agricultural innovation,” and they have concerns about “potential loss of scientific leadership.”

USDA lists the top 10 recommendations that it received. The first item on the list is “protect and expand research centers.”

The USDA published the full text of only a handful of the 46,000 comments received on its reorganization plan. The public is being asked to trust that the department’s summary mentions the significant points in all of these comments.

Deficient Analysis

The summary published on December 8 is the only document that the USDA has published to follow up on this fall’s public comment period. It is possible that USDA’s decision making has been unaffected by the comments it received.

The summary does not argue that these comments increase the department’s confidence that the reorganization plan is in the nation’s best interest. Nor does it assert that any issue raised by the comments requires the USDA to revise or cancel any part of the reorganization plan.

BARC is a major facility, and the USDA has yet to publish an estimate of the economic impact



PHOTO BY OWEN KELLEY

Yard signs supporting BARC and NASA on display in Greenbelt

of vacating BARC and the large office complex on BARC’s campus called the George Washington Carver Center. The public is concerned about these negative impacts according to the USDA’s December 8 summary. In 2024, the USDA had more than 500 headquarters staff and over 500 researchers who worked in Beltsville, as estimated in a November 21, 2025, post to the Greenbelt Online blog.

Deep Cuts

BARC’s staffing level in 2026 will be particularly important because BARC may have already suffered deep cuts during 2025.

The national total number of employees lost by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in 2025 has only recently come to light. On December 17, 2025, the USDA Inspector General published this number in a report designated OAI 25-064-01. It states that, during the first half of 2025, the ARS lost 1,647 of its 7,190 employees nationwide.

In the December 17 report, the Inspector General states it is the total loss through termination, resignation and retirement, not just through the so-called Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) that attracted media attention. During the first half of 2025, the DRP rewarded any civil servant who quit voluntarily with six months of pay without having to work during those six months.

Restraining Bureaucrats

During a July 30 Senate hearing, Republicans and Democrats expressed displeasure that the Secretary of Agriculture had ig-

nored the need for Congress’ input before she unveiled a reorganization plan. Congressmembers also expressed alarm at the magnitude of the USDA’s staffing cuts.

In November, Congress’ displeasure led it to reduce

the scope of the Secretary’s discretion. The USDA appropriations bill that Congress signed in November prevents the Secretary from carrying out any reorganization during 2026 without first obtaining Congress’ approval.

Accompanying this appropriations bill, Congress issued a Joint Explanatory Statement. This statement rejects the laboratory closures and research terminations that the USDA had proposed in May 2025. The joint statement does not explicitly block the USDA from vacating BARC. This omission may be the result of the joint statement being strongly influenced by committee reports published prior to the USDA announcement that it would vacate BARC.

The appropriations bill sets the FY 2026 funding for the ARS slightly higher than it was in FY 2024. In this way, the bill rejects the funding cut that the USDA had proposed in May.

Emphasizing this point, the Joint Explanatory Statement states that Congress intends the USDA in 2026 to fund research at no less than it did in 2024. To reach this threshold at BARC individually, the USDA would have to increase this year’s BARC funding to at least \$144 million instead of decreasing it to \$129 million as the USDA had proposed in May.

Uncertain Future

As long as this year’s agricultural research spending is no lower than it was in 2024 on the national level, Congress’ Joint

See BARC, page 11



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The Mountaineer

A High-Altitude Musical
by Diana Raynes



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Sunday, January 11, 2pm

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FBI Says HQ Transition to Reagan Building to Begin Immediately

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

On Friday, December 26, FBI Director Kash Patel announced the closure of the J. Edgar Hoover Building, longtime headquarters of the FBI. The plan to permanently close the ageing building is not a surprise and plans to find a new headquarters ahead of the Hoover building’s obsolescence have been underway for decades. “After more than 20 years of failed attempts, we finalized a plan to permanently close the FBI’s Hoover headquarters and move the workforce into a safe, modern facility. Working directly with President Trump and Congress, we accomplished what no one else could,” wrote Patel in his announcement on X, which said the headquarters will move a few blocks away to the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center located at 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. Until relatively recently the building had housed the headquarters for the now-defunct U.S. Agency for International Development. The announcement capped a long history with multiple twists and turns. Following a lengthy site selection process the FBI headquarters had been set to be built in Greenbelt, as announced in November 2023 (see the November 16, 2023 issue). Plans to relocate the FBI were to move “expeditiously,” with occupancy planned for 2036 and billions in up-front funding appropriated (see the March 20, 2024 issue). Trump

Cost to Relocate the FBI to the Ronald Reagan Building	
Project Design Budget (FY 2026)	\$23,500,000
Estimated Construction Cost (FY 2026)	\$789,000,000
Management and Inspection (FY 2026)	\$31,500,000
Estimated Total Project Cost (ETPC)	\$844,000,000

Source: GSA, September 2025

TABLE BY SANDY RODGERS

has long opposed moving the headquarters out of D.C. and in March 2025 described Greenbelt as part of a “liberal” state “three hours away” from D.C. “We’re going to stop it. I’m not going to let that happen,” said Trump about the move to Greenbelt (see the March 19, 2025, issue). In July 2025, the Trump administration and FBI officials announced plans to instead move the FBI headquarters to the Reagan Building. In response, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted for an amendment to block the federal funds appropriated for building the headquarters in Greenbelt from being used anywhere else (see the July 17, 2025, issue). However, that bill was ground to a halt. In September 2025, the General Services Administration (GSA)

officially proposed the repair and alteration of the Reagan Building to serve as a new consolidated headquarters for the FBI. Congress had appropriated \$850 million for construction of a new FBI headquarters though it is “not nearly enough to proceed with construction of a new facility,” the GSA stated in its new project summary. The projected budget for the Reagan Building headquarters is \$844,000,000. “The 30-year, present value cost of the Ronald Reagan Building Modernization is \$831,123,000 less than the cost of new construction, an equivalent annual cost advantage of \$50,425,000,” surmised the GSA in the prospects it submitted in September 2025. While Patel’s announcement last week contained no surprises, the move to close the Hoover Building and relocate the headquarters to the Reagan Building now seems imminent. Patel gave no date but wrote that the “already-existing Reagan Building” will save billions and allow the transition to “begin immediately.” The “required safety and infrastructure upgrades” at the Reagan Building are “already underway,” according to Patel. This move seems certain to circumvent a new headquarters in Greenbelt, certainly during the Trump administration and, with the diversion of its intended funds, perhaps permanently.

More County Musical Chairs: Blegay Takes At-Large Seat

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

On Monday, December 29, the Prince George’s County Council met virtually for a special meeting to appoint someone to fill the open at-large council seat following the resignation of Council Member Calvin S. Hawkins, II. Wala Blegay, who was already a county council member representing District 6, was unanimously appointed to the at-large seat. **Hawkins’ Resignation** On Friday, December 19, Hawkins announced that he would resign from his seat effective Monday, December 22. Hawkins will transition to a new position in the executive branch, as assistant deputy chief administrative officer for economic development. He had served on the county council since 2018 and his current term was set to end in December 2026. Council members are limited to two consecutive four-year terms. The council sought letters of interest and resumé by Friday, December 26, just one week from Hawkins’ resignation, despite the holidays, and made their appointment Monday, December 29, chosen from among the 36 applicants for the council seat. **Recent Seat Shuffles** Hawkins’ seat did not require a special election to fill because his departure comes within the final year of his term. A series of three special elections for the county council began in fall 2024,

when Mel Franklin stepped down from his at-large seat days before he was charged, then pleaded guilty to, felony theft and perjury. (Franklin served a one-year prison sentence and was then hired back to the county council as Hawkins’ chief of staff). Special elections for at-large seats, in which all county residents are eligible to vote, are costly to the county. In July 2024, Maryland Matters estimated the operational cost for the special election to fill Franklin’s seat was \$1.3 million, not including the cost of printing ballots or training judges. County Council Member for District 5 Jolene Ivey won the special election for the at-large seat vacated by Franklin in November 2024, triggering a special election for her former council seat, an election in which only District 5 residents were eligible to vote. Shayla Adams-Stafford stepped down from

Prince George’s County Public School Board to run and was elected to fill Ivey’s District 5 seat. Shortly thereafter, Ivey ran for county executive, which drew some criticism because it would have triggered another costly countywide special election for the seat she had just won. Though Ivey was a frontrunner, she dropped out three weeks before the primary, later citing health concerns. **Filling the Next Seat** Now a new council member will be appointed to fill Blegay’s seat by a majority vote of the council. Blegay began serving on council in December 2022 and her term would expire within a year, in December 2026, thus avoiding the need for a special election.



TOP STORIES continued from page 6

not include Greenbelt. The City of Greenbelt has repeatedly assured residents of its commitment to making Greenbelt a community that welcomes diversity. In February, the Greenbelt City Council issued a letter to the community, affirming its commitment to the Community Pledge and the values behind it. In November, the city issued a public statement in response to resident concerns about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities along the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Although acknowledging that the city has no authority over federal agencies or federal land, it is “committed to protecting the rights, dignity and well-being of everyone who lives, works and worships in our city.” The city offers guidance and other resources to residents who witness or are affected by immigration enforcement activity. Both a city ordinance and police general orders state that the Greenbelt Police Department cannot assist in civil immigration actions but may assist in cases that involve crime. It is not known at this time if any Greenbelt residents have been detained or apprehended by ICE.

Retired City Manager Jim Giese Dies

James K. Giese, 93, died on August 4, 2025. He was Greenbelt’s city manager for 28 years, serving from 1962 to 1990. These were turbulent development years that brought major highways, shopping centers and single-family housing throughout the community and threatened the green belt. City construction projects completed under his management included the police station, public works facility, senior housing, recreation centers, the indoor pool, ballfields and playgrounds.



PHOTO COURTESY NEWS REVIEW

Jim Giese

His stoic manner offset a wealth of knowledge of Greenbelt’s history, both political and social, which he enjoyed recalling through stories and writing. He was widely respected by his peers, city employees and residents. After retiring, he joined the staff of the Greenbelt News Review, gave tours of the Greenbelt Museum and was named Outstanding Citizen in 2010.

Goddard Budget Cuts and Equipment Divestment

This year the Trump administration proposed cutting NASA’s budget by 24 percent, to the lowest level since 1961. However, most of those cuts are in the Science Mission Directorate, the primary funding for Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC), where the president’s budget proposes a 47 percent cut. The proposed cuts to NASA have faced bipartisan opposition in Congress yet GSFC has already seen large loss of staff through



PHOTO BY DERMOT KELLY

Goddard Space Flight Center

See TOP STORIES, page 8

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TOP STORIES continued from page 7

incentivized resignations, retirements and separations.

At the end of August, President Trump took aim at NASA and a handful of other federal agencies' unions, to nullify them by Executive Order. Goddard's union, Goddard Engineers, Scientists and Technicians Association (GESTA), said that even without recognition it can continue to be a union, and plans to continue to support and advise employees, including with filing various claims, requests and grievances; fighting discrimination and defending workers; objecting to management mistakes; and agitating for change.

In September, GSFC began emptying buildings at a rapid pace and divesting equipment, leading to frustration and a sense of chaos among workers there, some of whom were given little notice of moves impacting them or their equipment. In November some staff were recalled to the campus during a federal shutdown to continue emptying buildings and completing moves. GSFC leaders have denied losing capabilities at the campus and claim to be carrying out the "transformation efforts" outlined in the 20-year Master Plan for GSFC that was approved in 2019. The Master Plan calls for many of the aging buildings to be vacated but also for renovations and construction to take place and was to be implemented over 20 years. However, in September, Associate Center Director Raymond J. Rubilotta announced that, "unlike previous large-scale Center reconfigurations, which occurred over a number of years, all planned moves will take place over the next several months and will be completed by March 2026." Some critics accuse GSFC leadership of complying in advance with a budget projection not approved by Congress.

However, Goddard's Acting Center Director Cynthia Simmons argued it is necessary to consolidate the campus following a loss of personnel this year. At its height, GSFC had 10,000 civil servants and contractors on its campus but following a "flat budget," and a big hit from the Deferred Resignation Program, those numbers have dwindled. In December, Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen said the Goddard workforce has fallen to around 6,600.

Crime Takes Greenbelt Lives

Crime was in the news too often in 2025.

On October 17, 35-year-old Harold Landon III was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole after being convicted of first-degree murder in the death of Mariame Toure Sylla, a Greenbelt resident and teacher at Dora Kennedy French Immersion school, who disappeared in Schrom Hills Park on July 29, 2023. After a search, her body was found decapitated and dismembered in a park in Clinton. Landon's motive for killing her is unknown.

On July 22 police were called to the scene of a shooting in the 9100 block of Edmonston Court. The 18-year-old male victim had been taken to a nearby hospital.

On July 25 in Laurel, officers found 33-year-old William Denard Askew of Greenbelt suffering from gunshot wounds and who later died. On August 29, county police arrested 48-year-old James King IV of Laurel, for Askew's murder.

See TOP STORIES, page 9



Mariame Toure Sylla

PHOTO COURTESY GREENBELT POLICE

Make Winter Cards At Artful Afternoons

The Greenbelt Recreation Arts Program invites guests of all ages to join instructor Amanda Spaid and make beautiful watercolor cards on Sunday, January 4 from 1 to 2 p.m. and from 2 to 3 p.m. at the Community Center, or on Sunday, January 11 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. at Springhill Lake Recreation Center. This project is suitable for participants of any experience level. Guests are encouraged to sign up in advance at sugeni.us/ehUi. Walk-ins are welcome as space permits. For more information, visit greenbeltmd.gov/arts.

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BUDGET continued from page 1

revenue projections. The primary challenges were: the projected new expenditures exceed the anticipated revenue by \$3.29M; the existing revenue sources, these being real estate and income taxes, cannot generate sufficient growth to close the gap; and the unassigned fund balance cannot continue to be a viable or sustainable funding source. Two required actions were to identify and implement new, recurring revenue sources and to continue operational efficiencies.

All present expressed concern about the city's financial overreliance on real estate and property taxes, a trend common across the nation. Some new sources were discussed. One was a rise in service charges, mainly by the Recreation Department in its camps and classes, with the goal to not make these services unaffordable to either residents or nonresidents. A cap on Code Enforcement fines from \$1,000 to \$5,000 was posited, along with an initial financial bump in stop sign violation fines.

As American Rescue Plan Act funds will expire after December 2026, both CIT positions requested by the Greenbelt Police Department will have to be funded entirely from the FY 2027 GPD budget. Salmerón said that salary increases would become a recurring expense as well.

Salmerón said that building and roadway infrastructure maintenance and upkeep costs are driven by inflation, up by 2 to 3 percent a year.

Mayor Emmett Jordan repeatedly shared his concern for the nation's employment and financial status, with layoffs and cuts in funding, calling it "a scary time." He hoped that these uncertainties would be factored into budgetary projections.

Jordan requested that each of the city's departments be questioned on how they would fare with a 5 to 10 percent budget cut.

Councilmembers Frankie Fritz and Danielle McKinney both

requested that residents should be kept informed in real time throughout the budget process about how each development will affect them. Salmerón was committed to transparency, saying he would make this information available.

Legislative Priorities

The second half of the work-session was a discussion with the city's two legislative consultants, who are charged with monitoring legislation that affects the city. Jim Tarlow, from LA Perez, will handle county legislation and Darrell Carrington from Carrington and Associates will follow the state. This is a new approach, with the goal being to get better coverage in this area.

Both consultants will provide weekly reports during both the county's and the state's legislative sessions, advising on which bills the city should focus on and the best way to advocate for the city's best interests.

The council has recently held two retreats where legislative priorities for the next two years were discussed (see the December 25 issue). Priorities include: affordable and senior housing; the environment; transportation; just

cause evictions and rent stabilization; ICE and immigration; and voting rights. The council will share these in more detail with the consultants.

There was a discussion on the city's desire for more control in zoning, permitting and safety measures with its capital projects. There was a feeling that the city might at times be better able to perform than the county in these areas, and that more city autonomy would benefit all parties. It was hoped that the consultants could help make this possible. Yet, it was acknowledged that full control over these measures was unlikely.

Carrington and Jordan said that new leadership at the state level makes this a positive time for the interests of the city and District 22, with new Maryland House of Delegates Speaker Josefine Peña-Melnik being a person known to Greenbelt. Carrington praised her work ethic and empathy for the needs of her constituents.

Tarlow advised a meeting soon with the county executive for the council to share its legislative concerns.



Winter evening at Greenbelt Lake

PHOTO BY KATRINA BOVERMAN

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Police Blotter

Incidents reported here occurred December 22 -28, 2025. Readers are encouraged to contact the police if they have information that may aid in an inquiry. Call the non-emergency number 301-474-7200 or email pd@greenbeltmd.gov. Times provided are when the incidents were reported.

Incident Summary
Greenbelt Police reported two deaths, two mental health diversions, and one domestic incident. A 16-year-old girl reported missing later returned home safe.

Assault
On December 25 at 5:53 a.m. near 5803 Cherrywood Terrace, a man was assaulted by persons known to him; he refused medical assistance.

Break-in
On December 28 at 6:37 p.m. near 5317 Smiths Cove Lane, a known person gained unauthorized access to a home and stole a large amount of foreign and U.S. currency.

Disorderly
On December 28 at 6:27 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a man and a worker were involved in a dispute that turned physical. When police arrived, the man became irate and refused to de-escalate. He was physically detained and arrested for being disorderly.

Fraud
On December 23 near 24 Ridge Road, a man dropped a check in the mailbox on Crescent Road; his check was stolen and altered.

Warrant Arrest
On December 24 at 4:25 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a man identified as a missing person who had an open warrant for second-degree domestic assault was arrested.

Theft Report
On December 23 at 4:51 p.m. near 7483 Greenbelt Road, two women and a man stole multiple hair products.

On December 26 at 7:04 p.m. near 9322 Edmonston Road, at least one package was taken from a doorstep.

Threats Complaint
On December 25 at 2:11 a.m. near 6006 Springhill Drive, people received multiple threatening phone calls from unknown suspects.

Vandalism
On December 25 near Cherrywood Court and Cherrywood Lane, suspected gang graffiti was found on a trash can.

Vehicle Crimes
Stolen Vehicle
Two vehicles were stolen: on December 22 near 6700 Lake Park Drive, a 2024 Honda Civ-

ic (Md. 2FP6238); and on December 27 near 6013 Springhill Drive, a 2018 Honda Accord (Md. 1GV7506).

Stolen Vehicle Recovered
On December 26 near 124 Westway, a Hyundai Elantra was stolen and later recovered by the Maryland State Police.

Tampering
On December 22 at 4:34 a.m. near 7732 Hanover Parkway, after a report of three or four youths tampering with vehicles, officers conducted area checks. They found a Hyundai Elantra with a broken window; no other vehicles were located.

Theft from Auto
On December 22 near 8009 Mandan Road, the rear tag (Va. TJZ8602) was stolen from a Toyota Camry.

On December 27 near 9156 Springhill Court a Honda HR-V was broken into and multiple items were taken.

On December 28 near 7710 Hanover Parkway, a Honda CR-V had the tires stolen.

Vandalism to Auto
On December 22 near 6520 Lake Park Drive, a 2025 Acura MDX had damage to the driver's side door.

On December 22 near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a man's brother damaged the mirror on his vehicle after a verbal argument.

On December 25 near 6148 Springhill Terrace, a 2003 Honda Civic had the windshield shattered by a large rock.

On December 25 near 7800 Hanover Parkway, youths banged and kicked a car door, causing superficial damage. There have been similar incidents in the area.

On December 25 at 9:43 p.m. near 5997 Springhill Drive, a car window was shattered by a rock.



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City Notes
With many city employees on leave, Constituent Services helped constituents with issues related to the Save As You Throw (SAYT) program, WSSC and Greenbelt Homes Inc. and sent holiday cards to neighboring municipalities and stakeholders.

Finance distributed SAYT stickers, and Information Technology installed three scanners at the police station.

Code inspectors inspected four commercial suites and three rentals, issued two building permits and attended training: Stormwater Modeling Approaches to Combat Flooding.

Animal Shelter residents are three dogs, five cats and four kittens. One kitten was adopted. Seventeen dog park permits are active and 84 spay/neuter vouchers have been issued with 46 redeemed.

Horticulture/Parks installed Christmas tree pickup signs and assisted Refuse/Recycling with collections. Facilities completed body repairs on a Greenbelt Connection bus.

Recreation publicized the Fiscal Year 2027 Recognition Group application and reminded current groups it was available.

The Community Center hosted the CARES/Greenbelt Assistance in Living program's Winter Wonderland. Community Center Maintenance deep-cleaned the commercial kitchen and, with Public Works, began deep cleaning and waxing the gymnasium and dance studio floors.

Community Art Weekly Meet-Ups
Enjoy two free weekly meet-ups starting in January on Wednesdays in Room 113 of Community Center. Yarn & Darn meets from 7 to 9 p.m. Bring a fiber art project to work on in a relaxing environment. Craft and Create, a new group for ages 18+, meets from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Bring a project in progress, or enjoy a new themed project each week. For more information, email alarsen@greenbeltmd.gov or mcason@greenbeltmd.gov.

TOP STORIES continued from page 8

A shooting on September 12 near Edmonston Court and Springhill Terrace left Mancel Johnson, 49, injured. After being hospitalized in critical condition, he died on October 5.

In separate incidents on October 4 and 5, Juan Gonzalez, 25, and Carltin Bayong, 14, were fatally shot in the Franklin Park area. Gonzalez was not a Greenbelt resident, but Bayong lived in Greenbelt and was a student at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

On October 28, close to Greenway Center, a juvenile male opened fire and a second juvenile male then discharged his weapon. The two were arrested in connection with the shooting; one also had an outstanding warrant for his involvement in a prior armed robbery.

Save As You Throw Pilot

As the year ends, residents using city trash services are preparing for the roll-out of the yearlong Save As You Throw (SAYT) pilot. In this program, residents will pay in part based upon how much trash they put out for collection. In addition to a slightly lower quarterly charge, city customers must either purchase special trash bags or, if they generate higher volumes of trash, purchase a sticker allowing up to 90 gallons per week. The city is also implementing other changes, such as requiring non-GHI residents to call for bulk trash and yard waste pickups as GHI residents have long done, and requiring GHI residents to remove cans from trash closets, sheds or enclosures on collection days. In response to comments from customers, the city has made allowances for those who are physically unable to put out their cans.

The city has stated that the change is necessary to avoid a larger, across-the-board increase caused by the city's failure to adjust refuse collection charges as costs increased. The SAYT pilot will be evaluated, and if it does not close the gap by reducing the amount of trash generated (and the resultant tipping fees at the county landfill), it will be necessary to implement a larger, across-the-board fee increase.

Save As You Throw bags



PHOTO BY ERICA JOHNS

See TOP STORIES, page 11



Toss it? No way!

Greenbelt MakerSpace Repair Café

Saturday Jan. 17 from 10 am - 2 pm
at the Granite Bldg, 115 Centerway

Come learn how to repair your tired or broken stuff (volunteers needed as well). Bring your bikes, clothing, furniture, appliances, computers, jewelry, toys, etc. for the challenge of making them useful again. Repairs are not guaranteed.

Tool Library: Thursdays 6:30 - 8 pm, Saturdays 10 am - noon, Sundays 11 am – 1 pm
<https://tools.greenbeltmakers.org>





PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Meetings of the GHI Board of Directors

on January 8, 2026

GHI Closed Meeting – starts at 7:00 p.m. - closed to members and visitors

a) Approve Minutes of the GHI Closed Meeting Held on December 4, 2025

b) Contract Matters

c) Legal Matters

d) Member Matters

e) Personnel Matters

GHI Open Meeting – starts after GHI Closed Meeting - open to members and visitors

a) Approve Minutes of the GHI Open Meeting Held on December 4, 2025

b) Statements of Closed Meetings Held on December 18, 2025 & January 8, 2026

c) Committee Reports

d) Board Appointment

e) Committee Operations Manuel

f) Reparations Commission Response

g) Motion to Hold a Closed Meeting on January 22, 2026

Members and visitors who wish to attend the Open meetings must register in advance via the following link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtd-uuqzoiG9XHGq9rswP_N9LZj33gb9r

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



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PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TOP STORIES continued from page 9

Council Election and RCV Referendum

For the first time since 1985 an incumbent Greenbelt City Council member, Rodney Roberts, was defeated in the 2025 election. Thirty-year-old community organizer Frankie Fritz, who was born after Roberts was first elected to council, joined the six re-elected incumbents when they were seated on November 10. This was the first year that noncitizens were allowed to vote in city elections, although only 22 had registered and just eight voted. The participation of 16-year-olds increased to 32, up from just two in the 2023 election. More immediate impact is expected from a referendum this year in which voters approved implementing ranked choice voting (RCV) by a 2 to 1 margin. However, a referendum to increase council terms to four years, up from the current two-year terms, was defeated by a 1.5 to 1 margin.



PHOTO BY NICK HALL NH

Councilmember Frankie Santos Fritz

Heat Returns to Apartments

Parkway Gardens and Crescent Pointe apartment residents on Parkway near Roosevelt Center were without heat from October 2024 through extremely cold weather until early February 2025, affecting all 42 Parkway Gardens apartments and 12 of 42 Crescent Pointe apartments. Three broken boilers prevented turning on central heating when cold weather began. Property managers provided temporary window or portable heating units which brought their own problems, including increasing residents' electric bills, buildings losing power due to extra loads and fears of fire. In December, city code inspectors issued violation notices, requiring the property manager to provide a permanent solution by January 20 or face fines. In January, property management changed from Pinacle Property Group to Dreyfuss Management, which raised Parkway Gardens residents' rent. The city issued \$14,150 in fines for heat-related code violations before central heating was restored February 5.



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

Parkway Apartments

Chelsea Wood condominium owners just east of Greenbelt city limits were also without central heat from October until March, due to breaks in pipes carrying hot water from boilers and failing boilers. Their situation highlighted complexities condo owners may face when things go wrong. Although the property is outside Greenbelt city limits, Greenbelt city staff helped by purchasing pipes for later reimbursement. Heat was restored March 4.

BARC continued from page 6

Explanatory Statement may allow the Secretary of Agriculture to reduce funding at some research facilities this year.

Nonetheless, Congress's top comment on the departmentwide reorganization plan was "sustain BARC's operational status and ensure its research missions continue without disruption, preserving a vital hub of innovation." This point was stated in the USDA's December 8 summary of the public comment period.

The Secretary believes she has the authority to relocate research centers, and her July 24 memorandum claims that authority derives from a 1953 law. In contrast, what the 1953 law actually authorizes is the USDA relocating employees who administer "farm programs," i.e., financial assistance programs for individual farms.

The President has not directed that the BARC campus be vacated. During his campaign, Trump did promise to move federal workers out of Washington, D.C. However, none of his executive orders that discuss shrinking the federal

workforce name a particular city, and most of them invoke the goal of reducing inefficiency. BARC advocates have argued that conducting agricultural research in Prince George's County is particularly efficient because of the great opportunities for collaboration with nearby researchers at the FDA, NOAA, NASA and NIH.

January Deadline

In less than two weeks, the Secretary of Agriculture is facing a legal deadline to report more than just the FY 2026 funding for each ARS research unit. In addition, Public Law 119-37 requires the Secretary to report by January 11 how many people currently work at each research unit and how many people she plans to hire at each unit during FY 2026.

Secretary Rollins' public statements give no indication she is aware of this deadline. The News Review asked the USDA Office of Communications and the Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics how the Secretary plans to handle the January 11 deadline. No reply was received before press time.



PHOTO BY ALEXANDRA FRANK

GHI resident Stephanie Frank brought the Greenbelt News Review to view the Skógafoss waterfall on November 26. Skógafoss, a 60-meter (196-foot) drop, is near the south coast of Iceland and a popular location for American film and television productions.

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2026

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PHOTO BY A FRIENDLY PASSERBY

The PE family spent Thanksgiving in Grand Cayman. At Rum Point, Grand Cayman, from left, are Gracy Premraj, Angeline Premraj, Aran PE, Catherine Premraj, Ryan Elder and Irudaya Premraj.

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Patrons Enjoy Spirits, Holiday Re-Gifting at the New Deal Café

by Matt Neufeld

For those facing that perennial but delicate holiday season question about what to do with unwanted gifts, the New Deal Café has their traditional solution: a free, public gift swap.

For about the 10th year, the New Deal Café on Sunday, December 28 from 1 to 2 p.m., hosted its Almost-Annual Gift Exchange. People brought gifts they didn't necessarily like, want or need, to swap for another gift brought by someone else.

A small crowd of gift swappers gathered in the main performance room at the New Deal to exchange a bounty of gifts. All who attended this post-Christmas-and-post-Hanukkah event agreed that it is a fun and unique idea. And, while they were at it, attendees enjoyed a New Deal Café lunch along with the exchanges.

"It gives people a chance to exchange something they don't want or can't use," said John Campanile, president of the New Deal Café board of directors, who was at the Gift Exchange.

"This was nice to do after Christmas," said attendee Kathy Friedman of College Park. "It's something to do on the Sunday after Christmas."

Among the gifts there for the taking were a wooden serving tray; two fancy refrigerator magnets from Japan; a hardback copy of the novel *The Maid's Secret*; a



PHOTO BY MATT NEUFELD

Some of the gifts available at the New Deal Café's Almost-Annual Gift Exchange on Sunday, December 28.

set of long, black earphones; and two thick, colorful and comfortable-looking wool socks.

"I like the idea there is, that when you get things for Christmas that you have no use for, you can take it somewhere," and exchange those items for something more desirable, while your own gift can go to someone who likes it, said attendee Kathy Kayser of Greenbelt.

Liquor License

Meanwhile, New Deal patrons have been celebrating during the holiday season the newly-approved and implemented sale of hard liquor at the venue – for the first time in the venue's 30-year his-

tory, Campanile said.

The hard liquor license was approved by county officials in July 2025; a required county inspection was completed in September 2025, and the New Deal Café officially started serving hard liquor to happy, appreciative patrons on November 20, 2025, just in time for the holiday season, according to Campanile.

For the New Deal's first five years, the venue was mostly a coffee shop and no beer, wine or hard liquor at all was served, Campanile said. Then, for the next 25 years – until now, of course – only beer and wine were served, he said.

Now there is an array of cocktails available. Among the varied offerings are the Greenbelt Highball, with vodka, lime mix and soda; and the New Deal Refresher, with citrus vodka and a honey-lemon mix. Cocktails are \$5 during happy hour from 3 to 6 p.m. daily.

One could say, upon reflection, that the Almost-Annual Gift Exchange and the new sale of hard liquor are the spirits of Christmas present, and presents, at the New Deal Café.

Bibliophiles Meet

The Bibliophiles of Greenbelt January meeting will focus on review and discussion of issues and books from 2025, especially in the context of contemporary politics. Among the books read and discussed in 2025 are *You Are Not American: Citizenship Stripping from Dred Scott to the Dreamers* by Amanda Frost; *Finding Your Third Place: Building Happier Communities (and Making Great Friends Along the Way)* by Richard Kyte; *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* by Timothy Snyder; *American Midnight: The Great War, A Violent Peace and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis* by Adam Hochschild; and *The Friendship Bench: How Fourteen Grandmothers Inspired a Mental Health Revolution* by Dixon Chibanda.

At their January meeting, the Bibliophiles will compile a list of books and discussion leaders for 2026. It could also serve as a community political forum to share thoughts and feelings on current politics.

Bibliophiles' meetings are open to the community and held on the second Wednesday of each month, in this case January 14 at 11 a.m., at the New Deal Café.

GAC Climbs to New Heights In Musical *The Mountaineer*

by Greg Young

Have you ever challenged yourself, perhaps physically in a sports event, maybe a local running race like a 5K or 10K fundraiser? How about mentally by writing a story, a script, a poem, maybe a lengthy report for your job? In trying to complete the task, have you questioned yourself on why you committed to doing it? The latest Greenbelt Arts Center (GAC) production is being billed as a high-altitude musical that explores the inner feelings and thoughts of a climber who has attained the initial goal of summiting one of the world's highest mountains, and having exhausted herself, must survive to get back down alive. With her love of mountaineering as an incentive, Diana Raynes has written an original script with a dozen original songs to form her latest endeavor, *The Mountaineer*.

Raynes is not new to writing scripts and not new to a love of mountaineering. Along with acting and singing, both have been a part of her life for well over 10 years. She works across music and theatrical storytelling and does so with original material. This fact is best exemplified in her current creation. Raynes uses the metaphor of mountain climbing to probe life-and-death decision making.

In *The Mountaineer* Raynes blends musical composition with narrative and performance. The audience is brought into the young climber's thoughts as she struggles to return from the summit and does so with music and song. With each step, as

she struggles to focus, we hear musically recited phrases, such as *Breath and Step* and *I'm in Trouble*, repeated as we watch the climber progress. Words of encouragement occasionally come from individuals off to the side who communicate by radio. It all creates the feeling of sharing a dream with the climber, questioning what is real and what is the result of her hypoxia from lack of oxygen.

To bring this original production to the stage Raynes has drawn on the experience of Eric Honour, who also happens to be her husband. Honour brings a broader artistic contribution of many years including as performer, sound designer, assistant director and director. Honour and Raynes combined their talents to create a short movie in 2019, *Harry! I Lost My Voice*. GAC audiences may also know both Honour and Raynes for their many years participating in *The Rude Mechanicals*.

With this unique production GAC continues its commitment to present new works by local and regional artists. So, if you are feeling post-holiday doldrums, challenge yourself to climb out of the lows and summit live entertainment. See *The Mountaineer* which opens Friday, January 9, and runs through January 17. Tickets are required. For more information visit greenbeltartscenter.org.

This production includes coarse language.

Greg Young is a Greenbelt Arts Center volunteer with the publicity and marketing committee.

Holiday Music



PHOTO BY RUTH ALICE WHITE

On Christmas Eve at the New Deal Café, a full house took part in a Holiday singalong that featured Christmas carols, a conga line and general merriment. Leading the singalong are from left: Frank Gervasi, Andrew Hennesy (at piano), Amber Hennesy, Margaret Benefiel, Joe Harris, Katy Gaughan (on stage with drum), Duane Bullock (on stage with drum), Gina Oliva, Tamara Alexander (on stage with trombone) and Sarah Headley.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HARTMAN

On Friday afternoon, December 19, the Ukulele Ladies led a Holiday Season Singalong with a packed New Deal Café full of audience/singers. Selections included traditional Christmas carols and Hanukkah songs in English as well as songs in Hawaiian, Spanish and American Sign Language. Pictured from left, on stage are Ellie Cossa (peeking from behind music stand), Jon Jones, Tara Wilcox, JoEllen Sarff (standing), Judith Glazener and Lore Rosenthal and front of stage (sitting) are Mary Moien, Ellie Clark and Duane Bullock.



PHOTO BY ALEXINA HAIRSTON

The Greenbelt Concert Band performs at the Festival of Lights at the Mormon Temple Visitors' Center on Monday, December 8. Sharing familiar festive music with a diverse audience, the band sets a joyful holiday atmosphere as visitors of all ages sing along, tap their feet and enjoy the seasonal celebration.



PHOTO BY LUC NEVEU

Ilan Neveu (31 months) enjoys holiday season decorations (and a stick!) in Greenbelt. His grandfather, Luc Neveu from Dreux, France, was visiting the family in Greenbelt.